Borough of Marlborough.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH'S REPORT, 1908.

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GENTLEMEN,—I beg to present my annual report for the year 1908 together with statistical tables, copies of which are being forwarded to the County Council, the Local Government Board, and a copy of the report on Factories and Workshops to the Secretary of State.

POPULATION AND VITAL STATISTICS.—The population is estimated at 4 123. The birth-rate is 14 55, the lowest in the last 10 years. The death-rate is 8 97, the average for 10 years being 12.27. There were no deaths from zymotic disease. Phthisis death-rate is 0.72. Cancer death-rate is 0.48.

AREA OF BOROUGH: HOUSING ACCOMMODATION.—The area of the Borough is 601 acres. The number of houses is 881. Eighteen are unoccupied, making 863 inhabited. Twenty-two new houses have been built, and of these 17 are occupied. Thirteen old houses are unoccupied. The building of the houses in St. John's Close is the greatest improvement in the housing accommodation that has taken place for several years. Insanitary conditions in two yards in the High-street have been remedied. One case of overcrowding was discovered and abated. Five houses have been put into habitable repair, and two cleansed and lime-washed. Many minor insanitary conditions have been remedied. Seventeen cess-pit privies have been converted into w.c.'s, so that there has been a steady improvement in this direction, and every opportunity is being taken to insist on this being done. In November, my attention was again called to the condition of Crown Court, about which I have reported on two or three different occasions. Details will be found given in a separate report on Crown Court.

WATER SUPPLY.—As stated in former reports, the water supply is excellent. There are now very few places in which the public supply is not used.

DRAINAGE.—The drainage outfall works gave rise to much anxiety during the early part of the year, and for some time there was practically a complete break down in the treatment of the sewage, so that the crude sewage had to be allowed to run over the land, and this, particularly in June and July, became a great nuisance, and gave rise to many complaints. The difficulties were dealt with, and by October everything was working satisfactorily, and in my November report I was able to state that at my last inspection, accompanied by the Surveyor, when I took specimens of the filtrate from some of the beds, I found that it reached a very high standard of purity. I then expressed the opinion that the breakdown was due to over-taxing the beds with too much sewage, and not giving them enough rest. I believe that the amount of storm-water which reaches the receiving tank is capable of still greater reduction.

SCAVENGING is carried out as formerly by contract, It has been done satisfactorily. A good many old large ash-pits have been done away with, necessitating more frequent removal of refuse, and I think properly covered sanitary dust-bins are in more frequent use. In 14 cases notices have had to be served to remove offensive refuse.

INFECTIOUS DISEASE.—There were again only 4 cases of infectious disease notified, 2 of scarlet fever and 2 of facial erysipelas. The Isolation Hospital was not used for any cases from the Borough. The drainage from the Isolation Hospital has been connected with the main drainage. Before another year passes I hope to see w.c.'s substituted for the e.c.'s for ward use. Though pulmonary tuberculosis is not one of the notifiable diseases, at present, in every case where it has come to our knowledge that a death has occurred or a case been removed, disinfection of the house has been carried out. The Public Health (Tuberculosis) Regs., 1908, will necessitate the notification to the Medical Officer of Health of all poor law cases suffering from pulmonary tuberculosis.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOPS.—One new factory and one workshop have been added during the year, and one tailor's shop struck off the list. A report is appended on the form provided for the purpose. Lists of out-workers have been supplied. The number is the same as last year, viz., 6 males and 11 females.

SLAUGHTER HOUSES.—There are 5 slaughter houses. These have been kept in a condition to fulfil the requirements of the byelaws.

COWSHEDS.—There are four milk vendors who have registered cowsheds in the Borough. Various improvements have been carried out at these, and the surroundings have been kept cleaner than formerly. In some there are still defects, chiefly from ill-paved floors, making it very difficult to observe strict cleanliness. In one or two cases defective drainage has been noticed. Improvements in convenience of scalding milk vessels have been made, and also for cooling the milk. There is great room for improvement in keeping the cows clean. There are so many sources of contamination of milk which are difficult to detect that one would have expected that more pains would have been taken to eliminate such a very obvious cause as this, and the extra labour would be well expended.

MEDICAL INSPECTION OF SCHOOL CHILDREN.—During the year the medical inspection of school children has been carried out in the two schools in the district. The reports of these examinations are sent to the County Medical Officer, who is the school Medical Officer, and the full report will be dealt with later by him.

(Signed) THOMAS H. HAYDON,
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